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C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 000151

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/19/2018

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SUBJECT: DAS GRAY URGES MOROCCAN SUPPORT FOR UNIFIL AND
HARIRI TRIBUNAL

Classified By: DCM Robert P. Jackson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: DAS Gray urged Moroccan Foreign Minister Fassi Fihri to increase Moroccan support for Lebanon during a meeting February 8, otherwise devoted to S/CT Dailey's call for support on foreign fighters going to Iraq (septel). He pressed for a contribution to the Hariri tribunal and asked Morocco to consider participating in UNIFIL. Fassi Fihri was noncommittal on the tribunal, and discouraged the idea that Morocco would participate in UNIFIL, implying that it didn't want to be put into a situation to be in conflict with an Arab population. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Gray appreciated that Morocco shared our concern about the situation in Lebanon and the need to get the new president in place as soon as possible. We now had little confidence that the presidential elections would proceed as scheduled. We continued to support the mediation effort of Amr Moussa. It seemed clear, however, that the Syrians had no interest in an agreement.

¶3. (C) Gray said the USG had two Lebanon-related requests at this time. First, we hoped the GOM would consider contributing to the special tribunal on the Hariri assassination. We think the Saudis, Kuwait and UAE may contribute, although only the USG and France had done so thus far. The UN needs these funds as soon as possible. In response to the minister's question whether we are seeking a significant sum or a symbolic contribution, Gray replied that even a symbolic contribution would be appreciated, preferably by February 14, the anniversary of the assassination. Second, Gray said, we hope you could consider participating in the UNIFIL. The peacekeeping force had been augmented in recent months, and participation was even more important now. He praised the existing active Moroccan participation in international peacekeeping.

¶4. (C) FM Fassi Fihri said in general, Morocco was supportive of General Sleiman and his candidacy, particularly in the Arab League. It was clear that Iran was supporting Damascus on this issue, hoping to maintain the status quo. He foresaw further incidents against the military to undermine Sleiman. On the tribunal, Fassi Fihri was non-committal, underscoring Morocco's close ties personally to Hariri.

¶5. (C) The FM said the GOM had considered joining UNIFIL two years before; the subject had been directly discussed between then-French President Chirac and the King in the context of a possible Arab contingent. The Qataris were excited about participating but since became disillusioned with the "vicious" role they had ended up playing. He understood that

the USG was unhappy about Sheikh Hamed's decision to withdraw. For Morocco, however, participating in UNIFIL would be difficult, implying concern about deploying in an intra-Arab conflict.

16. (U) DAS Gray has cleared this message.

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Riley